

DECEMBER 12, 2009: ONE YEAR LATER

**Kathy Figley
Mayor, City of Woodburn**

The West Coast Bank bombing of December 12, 2008 was a tragic event in Woodburn's history. It cost the lives of both Captain Tom Tennant, a 28-year veteran of the Woodburn Police Department, and Senior Trooper Bill Hakim of the Oregon State Police. Chief of Police Scott Russell was critically injured in the explosion, and West Coast Bank employees also sustained injuries.

"Shocked and saddened" were the words used to describe our emotions in our official statement the day after the blast. While the initial shock of an event so outside the small-town Oregon experience has disappeared, some of the sadness will always remain. Tom Tennant was a devoted family man, a dedicated community volunteer, and an outstanding police officer. Bill Hakim was a many-sided individual who was also devoted to his family and to his chosen profession. The 51 years of both of their lives seem far too short, although they were full, valuable, and meaningful.

Still, on the first anniversary of this event, our primary emotion is that of gratitude. We are grateful for the time that Tom and Bill had on this earth, for their friendship and for their service. Their efforts on their last day of life prevented what could have been a far greater tragedy. We will always remember them, and always love them.

We are grateful for the survival of Chief Scott Russell, and even more so for his recovery and return to duty. We are grateful for those who took immediate action to save his life in the aftermath of the explosion and those who cared for him in the hours and days that followed. Scott is an exceptional human being and an outstanding police chief. We are grateful to have him among us.

We are grateful for the outpouring of kindness, compassion, and help that came our way in the aftermath of the bombing. As we have tried to express our thanks to different public safety agencies, government bodies, companies and individuals who did what they could to help us during this trying time, we have become aware that we cannot possibly thank everyone individually. We have seen so many acts of kindness, and felt so many warm thoughts and prayers. We do appreciate them. We will do what we can to repay them with our own acts of kindness and assistance as we go on with our future.

In a forest, the fall of giants is often followed by the remarkable growth of smaller trees suddenly exposed to the sun and the flowering of a meadow below. Woodburn as a community has responded similarly. We have heeded the Tennant family's wish to remember "our Tom" through emulating his service to

the community he loved. We have focused love and compassion on those most directly affected by this event, and in so doing found it returned to us. We have accepted this event as an opportunity to improve as individuals and as a community. We wish this event had never happened, but one year later, we are a stronger and better community nevertheless.

On December 12, 2009, we will remember Tom and Bill and give thanks that they were part of our lives. We will give thanks for Scott's recovery, for the kindness of both friends and strangers, and for all the blessings we have received in the past years. As the holiday season and the new year approach, we will remember that love and friendship are the greatest gifts of all, and that we have received them in abundance.